

# Burning Issues

Winter 2002

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### CFC 2002 - Food, Fun, and a Car Wash

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) at NIFC was a success this year thanks to the efforts of Hallie Locklear (FWS), Teresa Wesley (BIA), Sheila Valentine (FS), Susan Wines (NWS), and Lisa McDevitt (BLM). They organized several events this year including a bake sale, silent auction, and a car wash rally.

Employees at NIFC raised more than \$26,500, which was 30 percent more than the amount donated last year. The number of people who participated also rose by more than 40 percent.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the 2002 CFC!



*Car Wash Rally. Pictured from left to right: Neal Hitchcock, John Jannuzzi, Rod Bloms, Tory Majors, Alice Forbes, Dave Koch, and Tim Murphy.*



## NPS-NIFC Employee Involved in Athletics for the Physically Challenged

Drive past the house of the VanHemelryck family on any given afternoon and you will likely see an ordinary scene – kids playing basketball or some other sport in front of the house. What you may not realize is that one of these children nearly broke several national sports records this summer. Jacob VanHemelryck, the 10-year-old son of Mike and Kim, is involved in many different sports, including track and field, skiing, and swimming. He has been SCUBA diving, rock climbing, hunting, and fishing. This would be a good record for any 10-year-old, but especially for Jacob, who was born with Spina Bifida, a deformity in the spinal column. The fact that Jacob is in a wheelchair isn't something the family dwells on.

Mike, who works for the National Park Service at NIFC as a Fuels Program Assistant, is Jacob's coach. Mike previously worked at Grand Canyon National Park, where there were not many sports opportunities for people with disabilities. Through a physical therapist in Flagstaff, Arizona, he learned about the Mesa Association of Sports for the Disabled in Mesa, Arizona. Mike and Kim wanted to give Jacob the same opportunities that other kids have. In Arizona, Jacob became a member of the Arizona Heat, a team for the physically disabled that competed in various track and field competitions. In addition, Jacob needed to become a member of Wheelchair Sports USA, one of the national governing bodies for wheelchair sports. Having moved to Boise last year, Jacob was without a team. With no teams nearby that Jacob could join, he had to qualify at regional meets as an individual instead of a team member to continue on to national competition. The day before the national competition, Jacob was asked to become a member of Team Shadow, based out of Seattle, Washington. Jacob gladly accepted the invitation.

In addition to coaching Jacob, Mike and Kim's primary goal is to give support. If Jacob wants to try something, they try to make it available. But before buying expensive equipment, they want to make sure he is really interested in a particular activity or sport. Mike also networks to find other people to help him coach Jacob. Through the many competitions Jacob has been involved in, the family has met many



wheelchair athletes and coaches who serve as role models and give advice and encouragement. One of the helpful people that Mike has met is Derek Brown, the wheelchair track and field coach at the University of Arizona. He and many others have given Mike a lot of pointers and help in coaching for Jacob's athletic development.

This past year has been very exciting for Jacob. The Winter Paralympics were held in Salt Lake City, March 11-16, 2002, in the same venues as the Olympics. Jacob watched the men's and women's downhill and sled hockey, which he would also like to try. Because the nearest junior sled hockey team is in Salt Lake City, Mike says that is something for the future. Over the summer, the VanHemelryck family traveled to Connecticut where Jacob participated in the Junior National Wheelchair Track and Field Championships. He won six 1<sup>st</sup> place medals and nearly broke a couple national records.

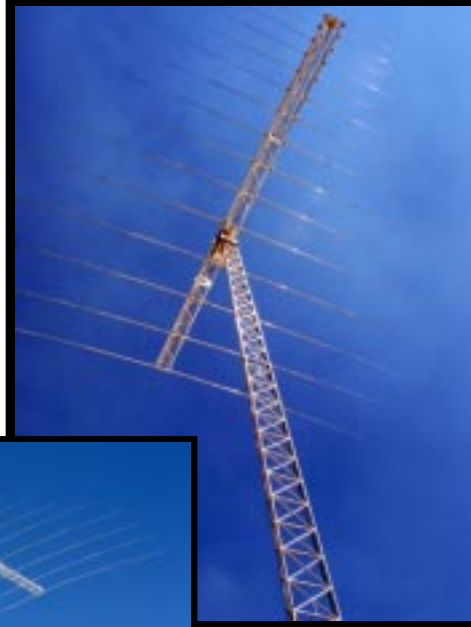




## New Share Tower and Antenna Set Up at NIFC

If you notice a new tower and antenna adjacent to the National Interagency Incident Communications building, then you are looking at one of NIFC's new emergency communications devices.

The broad antenna arms and a small, rotary component, sit atop a 60-foot tower and allows NIFC to participate in a national interagency communications network called SHARES. The SHARED RESOURCES (SHARES) High Frequency (HF) Radio Program provides a single, interagency voice and data emergency message handling system by bringing together existing HF radio resources of federal, state, and industry organizations when normal communications are destroyed or unavailable for the transmission of



information supporting national security and emergency preparedness (NS/EP). SHARES is one of a number of initiatives sponsored by the National Communications System in its role of planning and preparing for national security and emergency preparedness.

The SHARES network consists of 1,073 HF radio stations representing 85 federal, state and industry

resource contributors. NIFC's SHARES site is expected to be fully operational later this year. The cost of the system was minimal due to the fact that the majority of the equipment was donated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA.)

*NIFC's SHARES designator is "Fire Center Boise." "Fire Center Boise" will be fully operational before the end of the calendar year.*

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He participates in the 100-meter, 200-meter, 400-meter, and 800-meter races, and also the softball throw, shotput, club throw, and table tennis. Next year, he also plans to compete in the discus, javelin, 1600-meter race and possibly the 5K race and swimming competition. "It's been a great learning experience for Kim and me, but especially Jacob. He's met Paralympic athletes from all over the world," said Mike. The rest of the year he takes part in road racing and in the winter, skiing. Recreation Unlimited of Boise, Idaho, offers alpine skiing instruction for disabled skiers at Bogus Basin and has equipment to accommodate the skiers, so Mike, Kim, and Jacob have been able to take advantage of that opportunity.

Next spring, the VanHemelryck family is planning a fundraiser for Jacob. He has outgrown his

racing wheelchair and needs a new one. Another purpose of the fundraiser is to cover costs for going to competitions and possibly sending Jacob to racing camp. Mike Utley, formerly of the NFL's Detroit Lions has agreed to come to Boise to make an appearance during the fundraiser, depending on his schedule. On November 17, 1991, Mike was paralyzed during an NFL game. In December 1991 he began The Mike Utley Foundation (<http://www.mikeutley.org/>) to help find a cure for spinal cord injuries. Mike has agreed to make an appearance at a local fundraiser to help support Jacob with his athletic endeavors. There will be more information sent out as the date approaches.

Jacob's parents are proud of his athletic achievements and what it has meant for his self esteem. "This is probably about the neatest thing I've been involved in. I have never met any of these kids who feel sorry for themselves," said Mike. As for Jacob VanHemelryck, he's got races to win, javelins to throw and records to break!



## WITHER THE WEATHER: IMETS CHALK UP SECOND LONGEST SEASON

One word quickly comes up in conversations about the 2002 fire season: Busy.

That was certainly the case for the National Weather Service (NWS), and specifically, for the incident meteorologists assigned to fires, or IMETs.

“Even if we don’t have another IMET dispatch this year – and we expect a few more – we’ll have the second busiest season ever,” said Larry Van Bussum, the NWS staff meteorologist to NIFC.

The numbers tell the story. To date, 174 IMET dispatches were made in 2002. That ranks second only to the 2000 fire season, with 204 IMET dispatches. The hours logged by IMET follow the same pattern. In 2002, the IMETs chalked up 20,860 hours, topped only by the 21,910 hours of two years ago.

The season started early for IMETs, with the Hayman and Rodeo-Chediski fires especially requiring NWS expertise.

“Then of course came the Biscuit Fire in southern Oregon. Our first IMET was assigned there on July 19, and our last was released on October 11,” Van Bussum said. “We actually were running ahead of 2000 on our dispatches until mid-August.”

Safety is the primary focus for IMETs. They make weather forecasts specific to the incident, with a

special eye toward wind, humidities, and any other critical fire weather that could pose a threat to firefighters.

The system worked perfectly in June of this year. A forecaster

warned that a weather front was bearing down with wind gusts of 50 mph on a fire in the Daley Complex in Wyoming. A BLM dispatcher began contacting firefighters, warning them about the change in weather.

“Sure enough, the big wind came through, but everyone was off the line by then,” Van Bussum said. The quick work by the NWS forecaster and the BLM dispatcher was credited with possibly saving firefighter lives.

Although it’s early to make predictions about next fire season, Van Bussum says the presence of an El Niño condition in the Pacific takes away some of the guesswork.

“With an El Niño, the effect isn’t good for the northern tier of states, although it typically brings moisture to the southern states. Personally, my concern right now for next year is Idaho and Montana,” Van Bussum said.

Should the season prove difficult, weather forecasters will have some new technology to help them in 2003. Advances in computers and satellite systems will boost the communication capabilities of IMETs, improving their effectiveness.

Another plus is that twelve IMET trainees got valuable fire experience in the last year. They’ll join the 60 current qualified IMETs to expand weather forecasting capabilities in 2003.

“It was a successful season. We worked the IMETs pretty hard in 2002,” says Van Bussum. “Everyone has had their fill of fire. I think we’re ready for a breather. But if something happens, we’ll send them out. They’re a very dedicated group.”





## Herman: Aviation Training Specialist and Boy Scout Leader

Les Herman hails from Montana. He began his career as a fire lookout at Yellowstone in 1972 then became a fire control aid at Canyon Subdistrict. In 1977, he was offered the helitack foreman position at West Yellowstone smokejumper base. In 1980, he took the helitack foreman position at Mammoth Hot Springs. Les was in charge of one of the National Park Service's first helicopter rappel and short-haul crews.

Les came to OAS in December 1986. He is actively involved in the national interagency helicopter rappel program and short haul from 1987 to 1991 and is OAS's resident "subject-matter expert" for rappel and short-haul. He is currently responsible for training program development at OAS headquarters in Boise.

Les has a degree in fine arts from the University of Montana and is an excellent graphic artist. He has been able to apply these skills in producing Power Point

programs, videos, and training publications for OAS, DOI, and other agencies. Les has produced many of the Power Point presentations seen at the Aviation Conference and Education (ACE.)



Two years ago, Les spent a month in Antarctica monitoring the operations of contract helicopters that are supporting the National Science Foundation at McMurdo Base. Les will return to Antarctica in January 2003.

Les has been married to Judy for 21 years and has two sons, Mark who is 18, and David who is 15. His sons have been involved with scouting for 12 years with Mark recently being awarded his Eagle Scout Award. Les has been actively involved in scouting for the past 10 years as a Cub Scout leader, assistant scout master, and for two years as scout master. Last year, Les was presented with an Outstanding Leadership Award for his service to scouting by the Ore-Ida Council. He is currently in charge of the Venture Patrol for Troop 72 in Meridian and has facilitated two high adventure trips with the scouts. Several years ago, he planned and led a 50-mile canoe trip on the Missouri River in Montana and this year the troop completed a 20-mile backpacking/camping trip in Yellowstone Park.



## Cycling Team Spreads Fire Prevention Message Throughout Southern Idaho

Hundreds of elite cyclists travel to Idaho every year for the largest all-women's stage race in the world, the HP Women's Challenge. Competitors range from world champions and Olympic medalists to regional record holders to local favorites. Many of you may not know this, but NIFC co-sponsored one of the local teams that competed in the race that covers 543.4 miles throughout southern Idaho. Team NIFC/Richard's donned "Prevent



*The NIFC/Richard's Team preparing for the first stage.*

they visited these southern Idaho communities to help spread the fire prevention message.

"It was a thrill to line up each day with the best women cyclists in the world," said Janelle Smith, BLM External Affairs and NIFC/Richards team member. "The NIFC sponsorship helped make it possible for our team to be a part of this tremendous event."

This was the second Women's Challenge competition for Kasey Rose, BLM smokejumper, but most of her teammates were rookies to the race. Lorien Lightfield, a professional mountain bike racer, was a newcomer to the Challenge, as was Jenny Tobin and Janelle Smith; all from Boise. Two competitors from out of state rounded out the team. Christy Kopasz from Telluride, Colorado, and Emily Westerbrook from Seattle, Washington, joined the roster. Emily had also competed in the race in 2001.



*Jenny Tobin giving it all during the race from Twin Falls to Buhl.*

Wildfire" stickers on their bikes and raced nine stages with course altitudes ranging from 2,000 to 7,800 feet. The race began on June 15 at the World Center for Birds of Prey, just south of NIFC, and followed a 69.5 mile course to finish in Idaho City. The following eight stages took racers through Lowman, Stanley, Ketchum, Shoshone, Pomerelle Ski Resort, Burley, Magic Mountain Ski Resort, Twin Falls and finally back to Boise where it ended in Hyde Park on June 23.



The team of six women was greeted by firefighters, Smokey Bear and other agency fire personnel during the race as



*Kasey Rose in the pack during stage two from Lowman to Stanley.*



## International Assistance Helps Ease Strains of '02 Season

What may have been the longest fire season ever in the United States could have been even longer, had it not been for the help of firefighters and managers from Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Almost 1,000 people from the three countries joined ranks with U.S. firefighters in 2002, helping to ease the strain of a difficult fire season, said Tom Frey, BLM international fire and aviation program coordinator.

The number this year probably trailed only the 2000 fire season in terms of international assistance, Frey said.



“We were in the process of renegotiating some of the international agreements with Australia and New Zealand earlier in the fire season,” Frey said. “Once we concluded all of the agreements, we were able to bring them over fast and quickly blend them into the incident management teams, when their orientation and training was completed.”

The Australians and New Zealanders filled needed aviation and line overhead roles.

“One incident commander told me that he couldn’t have operated helibases without them,” Frey said. “They became critical resources during the peak of fire season.”

**Continued on page 8**

*Firefighters from Australia and New Zealand joined the firefighting efforts in 2002.*



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Forty Type I crews from Canada assisted firefighting efforts. They were joined by 117 overhead personnel.

“The Canadians had a severe fire season of their own until early August. In busy years, we always face a shortage of Type I crews, so their presence after their season slowed was very much welcomed,” said Frey.

Fire camps took on a bit more color than usual, with the flags of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia all flying in proximity to that of the United States.

“We also had a good exchange of fireline terminology. A spot fire, for example, is a spot-over to foreign firefighters,” Frey said.

The changes in terminology weren’t limited to fire matters, either.

“When the discussion of football came up, you had to be careful about which kind you meant – soccer, rugby, Canadian football or American football,” said Frey.

The help across borders wasn’t all one way this year. In mid-May, the U.S. assisted Mexican firefighters with a 10,000 acre fire near Agua Prieta, Sonora. In June, a 1,300 acre fire near Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, was suppressed under a unified command of United States and Mexican firefighters.



## International Assistance by the Numbers

### Canadian Assistance Received by the United States

- 40 Type I (20 person) crews, 800 people
- 117 miscellaneous overhead personnel

### Australia

- 40 miscellaneous overhead (ground and aviation middle managers)

### New Zealand

- 10 miscellaneous overhead (ground and aviation middle managers)

### Years Agreements or Arrangements Were Signed

- Canada, 1982
- Mexico, 1999
- Australia, 2000, 2001, 2002
- New Zealand, 2000, 2001, 2002







## Fire Leadership On-Line

Okay, everyone together: “Please, not another new website!” Seems like every day we’re told about some great exciting place on the internet. Occasionally, we go to the site right away and might even stay a few seconds, but most often we plan to visit it later and never do.

In this case, that would be a mistake. Sit down at your computer right now and type in: [www.fireleadership.gov](http://www.fireleadership.gov). Yes, fire leadership! There is now an internet site dedicated to all wildland firefighters and the leadership they require, even demand, on the fireline.

At this website, you can learn about a new approach to developing leaders on the fireline, rather than designating them based on who arrives first or who has fought fire the longest. Well-developed leaders make and communicate effective decisions that reduce misunderstandings, strengthen teamwork, and help increase firefighter and public safety in

high-risk and high-stress situations typical of wildland firefighting.

From information to tools, this website has something for every firefighter, whether he or she started 35 years ago or last year. Want to assess the cohesion or effectiveness of your crew? Try the Leadership Toolbox. Transitioning from a follower to a leader? Check out the training courses. Wonder what it takes to be a leader and if you have those characteristics? Review the values and principles.

The fire leadership website is one tool firefighters can use to learn about the skills and courses they need to become effective leaders, assess their growth and capabilities, and access references and materials for self-study and improvement.

Developing fireline leaders will take time and a commitment from each firefighter and fire manager, and this website provides not only a great starting point, but a long-term reference and tool kit.

## And You Thought Fire Season Was History!

The buses rolled in at dusk. Seconds later a stream of people began pouring through the doors of the parked coaches, heading for the chow line. Soon after eating, they set up their tents and unrolled sleeping bags. The day had been long, and the young men and women were tired. No, this did not occur at a late season fire camp; it unfolded right here at NIFC – on the grounds next to the Jack Wilson Building. And most in the group were not wildland firefighters – though they might want to be now – they were students from the University of Idaho in Moscow.



As part of a course introduction to wildland fire, 60 students and their instructors piled into buses September 28 to begin a two-day trip that took them from

Moscow to McCall to Boise to Lapwai and home again. They stopped first in McCall at Ponderosa State Park where they talked with the Park’s assistant manager about prescribed fire. Next they toured the smokejumper base, and talked with Payette National Forest Fire Management Officer Paul Hefner. By the time the students arrived at NIFC, they had already been talking fire for several hours.

Following a catered barbeque by the Job Corps, the students pitched tents and unpacked their overnight bags, before settling down to watch Discovery’s movie “Feel the Heat.”

And feel the heat is what many were hoping when they finally crawled into their sleeping bags that late September night! Fortunately, the weather was mild and few complained about being cold the next morning when they received a weather briefing from Predictive Service’s Heath Hockenberry. The National Interagency Coordination Center’s

## National Interagency Fire Center 2002 Fire Prevention Efforts Reach Out to Hispanics

This past season fire experts knew the Southwest was most likely to experience large wildland fires. Reoccurring drought and excess fuels set the stage for extreme fire potential. Fire prevention efforts focused on increasing wildland fire awareness in communities to prevent human-cause fires. Simultaneously, Hispanic leaders recognized the 2002 wildfire season may have some serious impacts on their communities and they requested that we expand our outreach measures.

“We knew some Spanish-language fire prevention materials and outreach efforts existed. What we didn’t know is how extensive they were,” said Al Murphy, Community Protection and Assistance Chief for the BLM’s Office of Fire and Aviation. The results indicated that current Spanish-language fire prevention efforts are limited to regional and specific local areas, and there was no national program. As is a lot of fire prevention material, Spanish-language messages are translated as needed. This outcome highlighted the question whether a national program was really necessary.

According to the 2000 census, about one in eight people in the United States is of Hispanic origin and 11 percent of the United States speak Spanish. Of that 11 percent almost 45 percent of the Hispanic population live in the western United States. By the year 2005, the Census Bureau predicts that Hispanics will become the most populous minority in the United States. Based on the 2000 census, there isn’t another minority that has the same scope as the Hispanic community.

More and more Hispanics are becoming homeowners, and business owners. Many are service and agriculture workers moving into smaller rural communities. Over the past decade the state of Nevada has experienced a Hispanic population increase of 144.6

percent. With these increases comes more involvement in work-related and property management activities in the urban/wildland interface. These percentages make it hard to ignore Hispanics as one of our growing audiences that work and play on or near public lands.

Generally, Hispanics prefer to receive information in Spanish from family or community leaders. The best media for reaching Spanish-speaking audiences is radio. Spanish-language radio, television, and printed materials are ways of overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers that isolate the Hispanic community.

There are many challenges when trying to reach Hispanic audiences. Foremost is the Hispanic community is a culture rich in diversity. It is made up of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish, Central or South American origin. Each has its own dialect of Spanish. Even regionally, there are distinct differences in culture and dialect. Second, how can we best to meet the needs of the Hispanic community and our internal agency needs from the national level and create a plan that is useful and flexible?

A small group was formed to develop a communication plan to identify goals and objectives with actions that can be implemented in the short-term. Six 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) were developed and distributed to more than 100 Spanish-language newspapers and about 300 Spanish-language radio stations. These PSAs were recorded on CD in Spanish and English and sent to Fire Prevention Teams and Prevention Mitigation Specialist in the BLM to coordinate with their Public Affairs for further distribution to mainstream radio stations. Another recommendation is to pull together a team of people to develop a longer term Fire Prevention Communication Plan.







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**AGRICULTURE**

September 18, 2002

Dear friends and colleagues:

At the end of August, I was diagnosed with a very early and treatable form of breast cancer. It is 98% curable and my doctors expect a complete recovery following treatment. I fully expect to perform the responsibilities of my position during treatment.

This week I will begin that treatment, which will include a lumpectomy, followed by six weeks of radiation. While I will not be able to travel for several weeks, I am extremely confident that our very capable subcabinet will ably substitute.

The form of the cancer, Ductal Carcinoma In Situ (D CIS), is very small in size and localized. This cancer could not have been detected without a mammogram, which only highlights the importance of preventive screening for early detection.

The month of October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and particularly during this time, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of regular check-ups and mammograms. Early detection can make a significant difference in your life. There is a great deal of information available regarding breast cancer and I encourage you and your families to learn more about this important health issue.

While being diagnosed with cancer is not easy news to accept, I am grateful that it was not more serious and that with appropriate treatment, a full recovery is expected.

I am also very thankful for the support of my family, friends, and colleagues and appreciate your continued thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,  
Ann M. Veneman

## Outreach to Hispanics

### Continued from page 10

The long-term plan has yet to be developed. Ongoing efforts will include participation from the

Department of Interior, USDA Forest Service and other agency partners active in fire prevention. Next year additional national actions focusing on the Hispanic community will be developed



with the input from the people most active in their communities. Now with fire season over, we've contacted some people in the field and we've generated some interest in putting together a larger Fire Prevention Interagency Communication Plan that meets the needs of a diverse audience. "There may be other audiences we need to focus on along with the Hispanic Community. We won't know until the plan is underway," Murphy said.

## Paint This!

Take a contracting officer whose job hinges on knowing details and following rules, give him a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and a Masters Degree in Education, and what do you get? An artist! Really! Meet Rich Harter – supervisory contracting officer for the Bureau of Land Management at NIFC and, yes, artist.

So how, exactly, does that happen?

“I started college as an art major, realized I had to earn a living, and finished with an English degree,” Harter laughed.

After earning his Masters Degree in Education, Harter spent the next 10 years as a juvenile court officer working with abused and neglected children. “I was on call 24-hours a day, seven days a week and it became too much, so I went to New Mexico and sold real estate,” Harter said.

In 1982, Harter took his first position in contracting with the Department of Defense. Contracting must have been a good fit because two decades later he’s still at it. But he’s also counting the days to his retirement in three and a half years so he can pursue his first love, painting, and his second passion for teaching.

“I plan to paint, and to teach art or English at a junior high, high school or junior college,” he said.

With so many laws and regulations on government contracting, the work can be tedious, meticulous, and laden with negotiations. And that’s one reason Harter loves painting, and looks forward to retirement and pursuing his art.



“Painting takes me away from everything. There is nothing else around me; when people talk to me, I don’t hear them.”



*Harter’s painting of humpback whales hangs on his office wall.*

Harter spent his youth sketching, painting and dabbling in art. However, he received no formal training until he attended Chapman College in Southern California. When he changed his degree to English, he took art classes outside of his regular college schedule. He started with sketches, then transitioned to oils, then to water color, and finally to acrylics, studying under artists from New Mexico, California, and Oregon.

Harter may not earn a living painting – yet – but he’s no amateur. He’s sold much of his work through galleries in Boise and Garden Valley. He’s given a lot of his art to family and friends, and donated it for fundraisers. He also teaches art through community education classes.

Harter says his current job is sometimes challenging, sometimes boring.

“My contracting job has been interesting, and I work with the best contracting team ever, but I’ve been at it 20 years and I’m ready for a change,” Harter said. “I mean, how many times can you buy wind socks?”

Rich Harter, however, is a patient man, and he knows that in a little more than three years, he can forget about wind socks and focus on his passions for painting and teaching.



## FIRE TRAINING GROUP COMPLETES WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION TRAINING CURRICULUM

Prior to the mid 1980s federal agencies used the National Interagency Fire Qualification System (NIFQS) to manage wildland fires.

In 1985 the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) adopted the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) which includes the Incident Command System (ICS) for federal agencies to manage emergency situations including wildland fire incidents.

In 1987, the NWCG Training Working Team (TWT) determined that the existing ICS ("I") training courses and existing NIFQS suppression ("S") courses were not meeting user needs. There was duplication among courses, a lack of skills training for various wildfire suppression jobs, and large demands on instructor preparation time.

To resolve these problems, the TWT issued contracts to develop recommendations for corrective actions. The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), Division of Training agreed to manage the contracts and oversee training development. Concurrently, the NWCG, Incident Command System Working Team (ICSWT) determined that a change in emphasis from a training based system to a performance based system would provide an improved means for measuring an individual's ability to do the job.

The revision of the Fire Suppression Training Curriculum to a performance based qualification system began. The performance based qualification system focuses on the ability of the individual to perform tasks required of the position rather than completion of training courses. If an individual has not acquired the skills necessary for a position then training is still a means to do so. The Division of Training with interagency field assistance developed position task books for all positions under ICS.

An Interagency Agreement to begin the Wildland Fire Suppression Curriculum Revision among the federal agencies represented at NIFC was signed in June, 1992. The curriculum revision was to be completed in ten years and proposed:

- Wildfire suppression skills ("S" courses) to support positions within the ICS organization.
- Job aids, where appropriate, to support performance of wildland fire suppression positions and tasks.

The Wildland Fire Suppression Curriculum Revision was completed in October, 2002 upon certification of S-420 Fire Organization and Management. "It's quite an accomplishment for our staff," said Deb Epps, NWCG training unit leader. The curriculum revision consisted of completing:

- Six "I" courses within the ICS curriculum.
- 52 Fire Suppression Skill "S" courses.
- 10 Job Aides.
- Review/revision of 60 Position Task Books.

Epps extended special thanks to several members of the group who worked on this project from start to finish including: Marion Matthews, Nina Walker, LeighAnne Squires-Kazimar, Bob Kambitsch, John Steffens, and LaMar St.John.

In addition to the courses and job aids mentioned above, the NWCG Training Units have also taken on the responsibility for maintaining an additional eight S courses, four dispatch "D" courses, two management "M" courses, two fire investigation "FI" courses, three prevention "P" courses, and three prescribed fire "RX" courses for a total of approximately 90 courses. The group is also involved in the new leadership "L" curriculum that is being developed by contractors.

"We are part of a truly collaborative and interagency effort to create safe, effective courses," said LeighAnne Squires-Kazimar, technical editor. "Every single course we produce is an interagency project; not just from our in-house people, but as a result of input we get nationwide from parks, states, the Nature Conservancy, wildlife refuges, you name it."

With all the courses created and on the shelf, one might think this project is over. But the courses are continuously revised and updated. "Now that we have completed the initial cycle I'm seeing earlier courses come around for revision, sometimes for the second time!" Squires-Kazimar said.

- ICS curriculum ("I" courses) that apply to all emergency response incidents, e.g., hazmat, law enforcement, structural fire, wildland fire, search and rescue, earthquake, flood, hurricane, etc.



## NPS WELCOMES FOUR NEW EMPLOYEES AND TWO STUDENT INTERNS

**Ed Delaney** is the new Information Technology Specialist (Data Manager) replacing Bruce Keene who left in December 2001. Ed joined the FMPC from Wind Cave National Park where he began his National Park Service career in 2000. The previous seven years were spent at various universities where Ed worked as an Assistant Professor and Associate Director.

Ed wrote his master's thesis on the geography of invention in the United States and wrote his doctoral dissertation on the emerging biotechnology industry, focusing on how and where solutions to problems were developed. All three of Ed's degrees are in Geography. He has taught database theory and concepts, and worked with data modeling and database development in a GIS context.

Ed, his wife Jean, daughter Ann, and dog Hershey, moved to Boise in August. They all enjoy canoeing, sailing, hiking, and snow sports.

**Pam Douglas** began her government career in 1974 as the receptionist on the Pinedale Ranger District of the Bridger-Teton National Forest where she spent four years. Pam moved up in the ranks and worked in other Forest Service offices, including the Intermountain Regional Office, Nez Perce National Forest, and most recently, Ashley National Forest, where she was an Administrative Officer. She joined the National Park Service at the Fire Management Program Center this past August, accepting the Administrative Officer position.

Pam has three children and two grandchildren (which according to her is "not nearly enough"), two miniature dachshunds, and three cats. Pam LOVES

to garden. She explained it, "inside my body, there's a farmer trying to get out!!!" She also loves to crochet, cook, and do woodworking projects. Pam was born in Rock Springs, Wyoming, a coal miner's daughter.



*Meridian Charter High School interns working for the National Park Service at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise are Adam Schmidt (far left) and Josh Hardy (far right). Tina Boehle (left middle) and Ed Delaney (right middle) are National Park Service employees in Communications and Information Technology working with the interns.*

**Adam Schmidt** is the new student intern from Meridian Charter High School. He will apply his technical erudition to the functions of the IT staff. He will observe how NPS IT staff operates; thus, developing a sound technical background.

As a dedicated pianist, Adam has competed in piano competitions since the age of seven. With an already vast collection of trophies and ribbons, he plans to further his anthology by competing until the closing stages. Adam also enjoys rock climbing, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

**Joshua Hardy** is the new student web and graphics developer. He is 17 years old and is currently enrolled in Meridian Charter High School as a senior. He grew up mostly in Idaho but has lived in many other places. He is mouse certified, which he received in his freshman year. He knows HTML code and is currently learning Dreamweaver. Josh is working with Tina Boehle in the development of the new web page.

Josh enjoys snowboarding at the local resorts, such as Bogus Basin and Brundage. He also likes to skateboard at the Nampa Skatepark located where the old stampede used to be. He enjoys riding ATVs in Cascade and on the dunes in Las Vegas. Josh's favorite car is the Porsche 930 Turbo, which he hopes to own someday. After graduation, he plans to go into the Fire Department of Santa Maria California where his grandfather is currently a chief. He will be with us until he graduates, May 30, 2003.



**Tom Monterastelli** has been selected as the NPS Aviation Operations and Safety Specialist. He is assigned to the WASO Aviation Office and based in Boise, ID. Tom has been an aviation professional for 37 years. He started his aviation education while a high school student in the Midwest and is a graduate of the University of Illinois, Institute of Aviation. Tom has worked in the natural resource aviation industry since 1968, starting with contract waterfowl surveys for the USFWS. Other natural resource aviation experience includes, mineral exploration and production, entomology research and control, and endangered species monitoring including aerial animal capture. Tom has extensive aerial wildfire suppression experience, both as a helicopter pilot and as an airtanker captain for 15 years. Tom holds all five Airline Transport Pilot ratings and has over 14,000 hours aircraft pilot-in-command experience. He also holds a Mechanic certificate with Airframe and Power plant ratings and Inspection Authorization.

Tom came to DOI from industry in 1987. He first served with OAS in Alaska as an Aircraft Inspector (pilot) for both fixed and rotor wing aircraft and pilots. He transferred to the National Park Service in 1990 where he served as the pilot and aviation manager for Big Cypress National Preserve in south Florida. Tom transferred back to OAS in 1993 where he served as the Principal Technical Representative in Atlanta, Georgia until being reassigned as the National Fixed Wing Specialist in Boise, Idaho. He also served as an Interagency Aviation Trainer (IAT). Tom left OAS in the spring of 2001 to become Aero Flite Inc.'s project

manager and pilot for the State of Minnesota's newly acquired CL-215 water bomber program. Tom returned to the National Park Service after the 2002 Minnesota spring fire season as the Aircraft Operations and Safety Specialist based in Boise Idaho.

**Noble Dunn** is the new NWCG Training Specialist with the National Park Service. He comes to us from The Lower Snake River District BLM where he served as Fire Operations Specialist and Training Officer. His career began at the Boise District in 1977, where he was a BLM firefighter on an engine crew. Later, he moved to the Great Basin Cache for a season and then back to the district as a Crew Supervisor. In 1997 he detailed to the Great Basin Training Unit as a Training Specialist Coordinating fire classes. Noble is married, and has two children; he is very involved in school activities and likes to ski.



## Continued from page 9

(NICC) Rick Squires provided a national fire situation briefing, and the group toured the Great Basin Cache and Returns Warehouse, radio cache, and NICC. A panel of public affairs specialists topped their morning along with a discussion on the political and social ramifications of fire management.

So, what will the students do with the information they gained from this trip? The course introduction says they will "use theater games and story-telling techniques drawn from dance, history, journalism, politicals and mythology to explore our complex love/hate relationship with wildfires and other forces of nature." Now that we'd like to see!



## The Monument, "Moon Trees"& History

Just recently, the Monument Core Team met as a group to catch up on old news and to set the course for future work needed on the Monument.

It was an intriguing meeting as several new items were proposed, these include:

- Moving the bricks from the existing walkway to a short vertical wall, set on a cement pad, with a sitting stone along the top. Monument architect, Lesa Stark, looked at the site with Bill Mitchell and the concept of a small vertical wall (about 22") tall was initiated. (See the map illustration of the proposed wall location.) As the wall is built, each brick will be catalogued to its location. This will help future visitors to the Monument locate "their" brick.
- Set for next spring, a second-generation "Moon Tree" will be planted near the waterfall. This "Moon Tree" is the progeny of several hundred original tree seeds that were carried to the moon by Astronaut Stuart Roosa in Apollo 14. Astronaut Roosa, a former Siskiyou Smokejumper jumped out of the infamous Siskiyou base in Cave Junction, Oregon. The tree will be planted near its associated marker. This young "Sycamore Moon Tree" was presented to Charlotte Larson (recent NIFC Retiree) in recognition of her career achievements as a "notable woman in aviation." In one chapter of her life, Charlotte used to pilot jumpships throughout the west. Charlotte brought the young "Moon Tree" to NIFC after deciding that it belonged to all of us - at the Monument. Presently the young tree is residing in the External Affairs suite - waiting for spring planting.



volunteer days! Actually, its part of an overall scheme that includes adjusting some pipes that feed the waterfall, (serendipitously, note the growth of the interior aspen grove!).

The team will also be looking for a volunteer or intern to do historical investigative work on the stories behind each of the Monument's memorial markers. This interpretative effort would involve developing a paragraph or two about each marker's origin; and then placing the history into a master visitor's guidebook. All are welcome to participate now if you know a bit of the history behind the markers. See Mike Apicello.

There are a myriad of other opportunities to volunteer and assist with these future plans. Local Eagle Scouts are eager to help with vegetation management (weeds) at the site, and perhaps tending to "Elvis" the goat (an offering from one whom we shall not name - Wini who?!). Other issues that will be addressed are Monument security and future visitor plans. Finally, the grand finale for next year will be an October 2003 Commemoration event. This event will be planned to coincide with the national ceremony held in Emmitsburg each year. This will be an opportunity for NIFC employees to maintain their vigilance at the heart of the wildland firefighting community. The Wildland Firefighters Foundation is working with NIFC management to make this happen. Ideas should be forwarded to Laurel Simos or Don Smurthwaite. Last but not least - let's always keep in mind the spirit of the Monument - "Common Ground, for heart, soul, and for each other."



- To further the dichotomy of fire and water, the team also proposed a native rock drinking fountain for those hot, thirsty,



## NIFC HOLIDAY PARTY

WHEN: DECEMBER 13, 2002  
 NO HOST BAR STARTING AT 6:00 P.M.  
 DINNER AT 7:00 P.M.

Where: Bosie Center on the Grove  
 850 West Front Street

COST: GS 7 AND BELOW - \$10 PER PERSON  
 GS 8 AND ABOVE - \$15 PER PERSON

Sponsored by the NIFC Employees Association

**LIVE MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT BY HIGHSTREET.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ENTREES FOR EACH PERSON IN YOUR PARTY!

SLOW ROASTED PRIME RIB OF BEEF \_\_\_\_\_

FILET OF SALMON FLORENTINE \_\_\_\_\_

EGG PLANT PARMESAN \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN RESERVATION FORM AND MONEY TO JEANETTE BUTLER (NPS) BY DECEMBER 2, 2002

### Blue Ribbon Panel

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Aerial Firefighting has just completed a series of Town Hall and government agency meetings, and is expected to issue their report in mid-November.

Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth and the Department of the Interior chartered the panel to look into all facets of wildland firefighting agencies' aviation programs. The Panel will identify facts and key issues related to safety and operational performance. The study was sparked by fatal accidents involving a C-130A and a PB4Y during suppression operations this summer. James Hall,

former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, and James Hull, Texas State Forester, co-chair the five-member Panel.

The Panel held open meetings in Atlanta, Portland, Salt Lake City,

Denver, Albuquerque and Sacramento. Invited panelists included heavy and single engine airtanker and helicopter industry representatives, private aviation consultants, pilots, and businesses who wanted to offer new products for consideration. Written comments were also welcome, with a deadline of October 25, 2002.

During the government meetings, federal and state agency aviation firefighting professionals offered their perspective on the status of the equipment, and perceived flaws and opportunities in aviation processes, guides and operations.

The Panel's report is due November 15, 2002, and is expected to provide an assessment of agency and contractor aerial firefighting programs, and a set of findings that can help agencies develop action items.

More information on the members and charter of the Blue Ribbon Panel is available at [www.fs.fed.us/fire/blue\\_ribbon](http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/blue_ribbon)

